

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

For Release July 18, 1969

Carroll 343-5634

### PUBLIC ELK HUNT PLANNED ON WILDLIFE REFUGE IN OKLAHOMA

The Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife announced today that it proposes to permit public hunting in December on the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma, to reduce the size of the elk herd that is overgrazing its available range.

The present elk population of 535 is about 185 more than the refuge habitat will support. Most of this surplus will be trapped and transplanted to other suitable areas. About 60 are expected to be taken by hunting, the only alternative in certain rugged and rocky portions of the refuge where trapping would be impossible.

The proposed public hunt is being arranged by the Bureau and Oklahoma's Department of Wildlife Conservation.

Last year the State transplanted 287 elk from Wichita Mountains to eastern Oklahoma, with a few sent to Fort Sill.

Some range damage has already occurred. The welfare of the herd and the condition of the range would be further jeopardized if a public hunt is not held, the Bureau stressed.

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